

# Local high-tech lab gets \$2M

The federal grant will be used for advances in micro-machines.

By **CHUCK SWEENEY**  
*Rockford Register Star*

**ROCKFORD** — The Rock River Valley's effort to become a center for manufacturing innovation got a boost Friday when U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo announced a \$2 million grant for Ingersoll Machine Tools to develop tiny machines that make parts no bigger than a

human hair.

The grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce comes from the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Advanced Technology Program.

Manzullo spokesman Rich Carter said Ingersoll will use the grant at Rockford's EIGERlab, a consortium of universities, colleges, industries and governments working to develop modern manu-



Tom  
McDunn

facturing technologies.

The grant adds to the \$5.25 million in federal money already awarded to EIGER — \$3.75 million from the Pentagon for development of future combat systems and \$1.5 million from the Small Business Administration to commercialize EIGERlab's technologies and start companies.

"The federal government has now invested more than \$7 million in the past year in the EIGERlab," said Manzullo, R-Egan. "This award is a

## What is EIGER?

EIGER stands for Edson Ingersoll Gaylord Education Research, in honor of Edson Gaylord, the late CEO of the Ingersoll Milling Machine Co. The century-old Rockford company went bankrupt last year. The firm's assets were awarded by a bankruptcy judge to Camozzi Group of Brescia, Italy, which began a new company called Ingersoll Machine Tools.

## What is the EIGERlab?

The EIGERlab is a public-private venture of universities, governments and manufacturers. Partners include Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, University of Illinois, Rock Valley College, The Abilities Center, Hamilton Sundstrand, Boeing, Alion Science and Technology, Caterpillar, Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce and various Rockford-area manufacturers.

Sources: U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan; Tom McDunn, director of EIGERlab

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reaffirmation that Rockford will be the high-tech manufacturing capital of the United States, if not the world, for years to come."

Ingersoll, 707 Fulton Ave., will partner with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Northwestern University.

"This grant is aimed at pushing forward the exciting, new technology of micromachining and micromachine tools. The idea is that instead of using large, expensive tools, we are developing technologies where we can make smaller, compact and affordable machine tools," said

Dick DeVor, a U of I research professor in Urbana-Champaign.

The money will help Ingersoll and EIGERlab workers develop machine tool components, including a high-speed spindle "that will develop very small cutting tools as small as a human hair," DeVor said.

The EIGERlab is independent of Ingersoll but housed on the company's Fulton Avenue campus. The lab is being refurbished with a \$100,000 state grant and will have a grand opening May 26, said Tom McDunn, EIGERlab director. It will start with a staff of about 20 people, he said.

McDunn said the Commerce Department grant has an interesting history. It was written in 2002 by Ingersoll Milling Machine Co., which went bankrupt in 2003.

"The idea was so good that the grant application survived the bankruptcy, and when Ingersoll started up again under new owners, the money was finally broken loose," McDunn said.

Ingersoll Machine Tools is owned by Camozzi Group of Brescia, Italy. Ingersoll officials were not available Friday afternoon for comment.

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## High-tech manufacturing project gets \$2M grant

U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo announced Friday that Ingersoll Machine Tools of Rockford will receive a \$2 million federal grant to develop small cutting tools.

The money will be used at Ingersoll by a consortium of industries and educational institutions working to develop modern manufacturing technologies.

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